United Nations A/ES-10/589–S/2013/269

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
7 May 2013

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 6 May 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues its oppression of the Palestinian people by means of all illegal policies, including, by violating their freedom of religious worship and access to holy places. This has again been starkly reflected in the recent obstruction of Christian Easter ceremonies, particularly in the Old City of Occupied East Jerusalem, where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located, a holy site and major pilgrimage centre for Christians from around the world.

Tens of thousands of Palestinian Christians and their brethren who were attempting to access Occupied East Jerusalem were physically and verbally harassed, some of them beaten, at various checkpoints erected by the Israeli occupying forces in and around the city. Many of them were completely prevented and others delayed from participating in religious ceremonies to mark Holy Saturday on the eve of the Christian Orthodox Easter. This included the obstruction of a visit organized by Palestinian Christian groups and the Palestinian Governor of the Jerusalem Governorate with foreign diplomats.

Such aggressive behaviour by the occupying Power once again marred the Easter celebrations and the centuries-old rituals performed on this day. Moreover, Israel's actions constituted yet another attempt to undermine and deny the Christian identity and presence in the city, along with other unlawful measures it continues to pursue targeting the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim identity and character of the city. Such illegal measures include, but are not limited to, settlement and wall construction, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian families, revocation of residency rights, excavations, restrictions on access to the city and the continued closure of official Palestinian institutions.

We condemn all of these illegal actions by Israel, the occupying Power, and demand their immediate cessation. On this occasion, we vociferously condemn all Israeli measures impeding access by the Palestinian people and other Christians and

Please recycle

Muslims from around the world to the religious sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and violating their right to worship freely. The international community must be resolute in demanding an end to Israel's oppression and violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people and an end to all actions aimed at illegally and deliberately altering the demographic composition, character, identity and nature of the Palestinian land it has forcibly occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem.

While Israel persists in denying the freedom of worship of the Palestinian people, it continues to facilitate the demands of Jewish extremists to worship at sites throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, Al-Khalil, Bethlehem and Nablus. For example, just yesterday, more than 1,000 Israeli extremists accompanied by Israeli occupying forces descended in the middle of the night upon Joseph's Tomb, which is located near the Balata refugee camp, east of Nablus. The occupying forces protecting them unleashed tear gas and stun grenades against Palestinian residents in the area, causing several injuries. This was preceded on Saturday by a raid by hundreds of Israeli settlers on the Ras Karkar village of Ramallah, where they attacked Palestinian civilians and set fire to houses and olive trees. The Israeli occupying forces that intervened fired rubber bullets and tear gas at the Palestinians protesting this attack, and the settlers obstructed ambulances from entering the village to treat the wounded civilians.

These are but a few examples of the constant terror and provocations that the Palestinian people are forced to endure under Israel's occupation. We stress once again that the actions of Israeli religious extremists and settlers are stoking tensions between the two sides, inflaming religious sensitivities and undermining the fragile situation on the ground. We draw the attention of the international community, including the Security Council, to this volatile situation and the persistence of illegal Israeli policies and practices in this regard. The international community must send an unequivocal message to Israel, the occupying Power, that such illegal actions and provocations must cease and will not be tolerated and that Israel is wholly responsible for the negative impact and consequences of such actions on the ground and on the regional and international efforts to salvage the prospects for a peaceful solution.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 461 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 2 May 2013 (A/ES-10/588-S/2013/260) constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations